

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in the current application. Of those, claim 1 is an independent claim. Claim 1 is amended by this Response. Claims 6 and 8-10 are canceled by this Response. No new claims are added by this Response.

Allowable Subject Matter

Initially, Applicant notes the Examiner's indication claims 8-10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim Objections

Claim 6 stands objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being of improper dependent form for failing to limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 6 is canceled by this Response, and therefore, any objections or rejections concerning claim 6 are rendered moot.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,333,715, herein Kato) in view of Starck (U.S. Pat. No. 6,419,512, herein Starck). Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Starck in view of Kato. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 contains the features of claim 8 rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, which as noted above is indicated as allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant

respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable for at least the above reasons. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-5 and 7, which depend from claim 1, are patentable for at least the same reasons discussed above in regards to claim 1 as well as on their own merits.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the objections and rejections and allowance of each of the claims in connection with the present application is earnestly solicited.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) hereby petition(s) for a two (2) month extension of time for filing a reply to the outstanding Office Action and submit the required \$450.00 extension fee herewith.

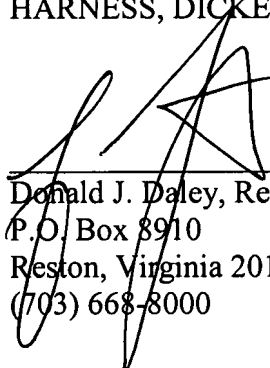
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Donald J. Daley at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

HARNESS, DICKEY, & PIERCE, P.L.C.

By

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